

'Work–life balance' refers to the need for employees to balance their work and outside-work commitments in a way that assists their sometimes competing demands to be met. This term in more recent times has been replaced with 'workplace flexibility'.

Employers may benefit if they are able to be sufficiently flexible to assist employees balancing their various work and other commitments.

Outside-work commitments may include the following: family responsibilities such as caring for children or parents; study/education; sporting/cultural pursuits; and participation in community organisations such as emergency services organisations and charities, etc.

The diversity of the work–life balance issue means that it covers a wide range of employment practices. The most common ones include:

- various types of flexible working hours
- various types of paid and unpaid leave entitlements, often incorporated into an overall flexible leave policy
- amenities at the workplace, such as breastfeeding facilities
- working from home, and
- phased retirement arrangements.

A flexibility policy is a general statement that sets out the organisation's approach to work–life balance. However, it is normally complemented by separate, more specific policy statements on each particular strategy, for example a separate Flexible Leave Policy.

A final issue is the need for an organisation's culture to back the policy. Many work–life balance policies have come unstuck because employers have not seen value in providing such flexibility and/or employees have misunderstood the purpose of the flexibility and have dropped their output/work quality in the more flexible environment. The policy statement should address these issues.

Whilst the object of this policy is to assist in maintaining balance and productivity within the workplace, it is important to ensure that consideration is given to any statutory or other obligation which may require an employer to consider flexible working arrangements.

In particular, from 1 January 2010, employers who are covered by the *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)* ('the Act') are required to consider any requests for flexible work arrangements by employees who have children under school age, or children under 18 with a disability.

## **FLEXIBILITY POLICY**

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The Company acknowledges that employees need to be able to achieve an effective balance between their work and outside-work commitments. Outside-work commitments may include family and carer responsibilities, further education, and involvement in various community organisations and activities.

### **2. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY**

- 2.1 This Policy applies to employees of The Company.
- 2.2 This Policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

### **3. ACHIEVING WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY**

- 3.1 Achieving an optimum balance is essential to maintain high productivity at work.
- 3.2 To help achieve and maintain an effective balance, The Company may give consideration to a range of flexible working arrangements, leave entitlements and other forms of assistance which are aimed at meeting the needs of both our organisation and employees with outside-work commitments.
- 3.3 The list below notes some flexibilities that may be considered. However, The Company retains the discretion to consider each case separately, and on its individual merits.
- 3.4 The range of flexible working arrangements that may be considered is as follows:
- (a) part-time work
  - (b) part-time work after resuming from parental leave
  - (c) casual work
  - (d) job sharing
  - (e) variable starting and finishing times
  - (f) time off in lieu after extra hours have been worked
  - (g) annualised working hours, where working hours are varied according to workloads but averaged out over each 6-month period
  - (h) working from home on either a permanent or occasional basis
  - (i) phasing in to retirement
  - (j) career breaks, for employees who have completed a specified period of service with the business;
  - (k) other arrangements reasonably proposed by employees.

## Variations

The Company reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

## WORKPLACE PARTICIPANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*I acknowledge:*

- *receiving the The Company Policy;*
- *that I should comply with the policy; and*
- *that there may be disciplinary consequences if I fail to comply, which may result in the termination of my employment.*

Your name:

Signed:

Date:

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